

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF RIVERSIDE**  
***CITY PLANNING COMMISSION***  
1,866th Meeting



6:00 p.m. September 30, 2004  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL  
3900 MAIN STREET

**APPROVED AS PRESENTED AT THE  
FEBRUARY 17, 2005 MEETING**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Agnew, Comer, Densmore, Kurani, Leonard, Norton, Singletary

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Brown, Stephens

STAFF PRESENT:

- Gutierrez, Planning Director
- Aaron, Principal Planner
- Jenkins, Diane, Senior Planner
- Brenes, Associate Planner
- Smith, Deputy City Attorney
- Stetson, Cotton Bridges Associates
- Morrison, The Arroyo Group
- Andrade, Stenographer

**THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED:**

Chair Agnew called the Planning Commission meeting. He announced that this was an information workshop and that no decisions would be made today. The audience will have an opportunity at the end of the presentation to make any comments.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

A. **DISCUSSION CALENDAR** ..... [3](#)

1. **GENERAL PLAN 2025 PROGRAM - WORKSHOP #1:** ..... [3](#)

B. **ADJOURNMENT** ..... [10](#)

A. **DISCUSSION CALENDAR** - 6:00 p.m.

1. **GENERAL PLAN 2025 PROGRAM - WORKSHOP #1:** This workshop will include, but not be limited to, an overview of the General Plan 2025 Program and review of the following elements of the General Plan: Land Use and Urban Design, Air Quality and Arts and Culture. Additional elements may be reviewed as time permits.

Craig Aaron, Principal Planner, welcomed the Commission to the first of four workshops on the General Plan 2025. He introduced Laura Stetson, consultant with Cotton Bridges Associates and Larry Morrison with The Arroyo Group.

Commissioner Comer arrived at this time.

Laura Stetson, consultant Cotton Bridges Associates, complimented the Planning Department staff for their hard work. She asked the commission to feel free to ask questions as they go through their presentation. The focus of this workshop will be the three Elements: Land Use and Urban Design, Arts and Culture and Air Quality. If they have time available and the Commission wants to move forward, she suggested reviewing the Education Element. She stated that the foundation for the General Plan was the Visioning Riverside document done in 2002 which established the policies and direction of how Riverside envisions itself.

She began the overview of the Land Use Element. A new idea being introduced in this chapter is “smart growth”. The plan looks to apply smart growth principles to all new development throughout Riverside. She introduced Larry Morrison, consultant with The Arroyo Group, who addressed the Urban Design portion.

Larry Morrison stated it was a pleasure to work with planning staff. He stated that what they, as consultants, presented tonight reflected the wisdom of the community and staff as a result of the workshops held over the last 18 months. He presented the concept of Riverside Park, with human made and natural elements. The idea is one of a system of parkways that help create the Riverside Park, a citywide park that contributes to the unique identity of Riverside and each of its neighborhoods. These concepts provide a background for the structure of land uses Ms. Stetson will be addressing.

Ms. Stetson showed some slides depicting the neighborhoods. She reiterated that these are neighborhoods that exist today. The most important thing to keep in mind about these neighborhoods is that the Neighborhood Plans will replace what the City currently has as Community Plans. There have been a series of Community Plans developed throughout Riverside over the years to try to gear specific programs and policies to areas that are unique. As part of this General Plan, those Community Plans will go away and will be replaced by the Neighborhood Plans in the General Plan. The objectives and policies in those community plans have been included in the new Neighborhood Plans, as they continue to be relevant today, in the General Plan.

Commissioner Densmore inquired what the key ingredients were to define a neighborhood. He asked if it was at all defined by the people. A boundary definition of those that live in the neighborhood.

Ms. Stetson agreed that people can feel very strongly about where they live. She explained that the neighborhood boundaries were established before the General Plan process.

Commissioner Norton gave an example of a Mayor's Night Out meeting in the Sycamore Highland area in which the residents were asked if they wanted to be their own Sycamore Highland Neighborhood, adding a new neighborhood. The residents emphatically said no, they wanted to remain known as Canyon Crest. She agreed and believed that the residents have defined the 26 neighborhoods as they exist in Riverside.

Commissioner Kurani stated the Arlington area has grappled with the boundary issue. He asked if there were any defined boundaries and what the process was to define those boundaries.

Ms. Stetson replied that there were definitely defined boundaries. She referred to the objectives and policies section in the General Plan and noted that prior to discussing each neighborhood a map is included showing the area it encompasses. This is important because the objectives and policies are written specifically for that geographic area. She informed the Commission that the boundaries were developed by the Office of Neighborhoods through a long process prior to the General Plan.

Ms. Stetson continued with the presentation and addressed land use categories.

Commissioner Norton asked what kind of recommendations staff had for the new category “high density”, most people would think apartments. She pointed out that the City has been trying to encourage home ownership.

Ms. Stetson explained that it was difficult to dictate policy that a development shall be for rental or ownership in a General Plan document. Certainly, as applications come in as part of the review process and because there will be a set of Citywide Design Guidelines, the Commission can ensure the projects are high quality and high density development no matter whether it is rental or ownership.

Commissioner Kurani noticed that most of the very high density is proposed to be around California Baptist University. There are two other universities in the city which will be impacted heavily given the expansion. He asked whether staff envisioned a need for high density in those areas.

Ms. Stetson informed the Commission that UCR is currently working on their long range development plan that does provide a lot of housing on campus. As part of this review, the Commission could certainly recommend supplementing this. She pointed out that along University and in the downtown area, high density residential is allowed even though it is not designated. She said that by virtue of the fact that the area is designated mixed use, higher density residential is included.

Commissioner Leonard inquired if photographic examples would be provided of how these densities relate to buildings on the ground as was done for the Citizens Advisory Committee. He stated this would be beneficial for the Commission and public as well.

Ms. Stetson said that they have this for mixed-use and if it would help the Commission they can return with examples of various densities.

She continued with her presentation.

Commissioner Densmore asked to what extent, regarding mixed use, does the General Plan build upon what exists or does it only reflect what the area should be. He referred to 5-points and certain areas of University which are problematic, which were mentioned earlier by Ms. Stetson.

Ms. Stetson stated that the plan definitely builds upon what is. It takes the best of what is today and tries to improve it. There are some great businesses at 5-points, why not create a population base that can make better use of those businesses.

Commissioner Norton when you talk about the sphere of influence, what does the map you have indicate. There were two concepts of the sphere of influence in Riverside. Does this one indicate the lesser of the spheres.

Ms. Stetson noted that the current sphere extends twice as far as Cajalco Road, which is where the General Plan places the proposed boundary. This plan proposes that the sphere area be limited to where the Cajalco corridor might go through in the future.

Commissioner Kurani asked about the school infrastructure. Currently developers will pay their fees and proceed with their developments. These school systems are impacted heavily but at what point would the State step in and do its share with regard to the school districts. The schools may have to go vertical as there will be no land available for them to acquire.

Ms. Stetson said that there are very strong policies in the Education Element that address the fact that infrastructure needs to be timed with the critical infrastructure of schools. The City needs to work closely with the Alvord and Riverside school districts to ensure growth is not outpacing the ability of the schools to meet the needs of any new children that come in and to work and support the efforts of the districts to provide different types of schools.

Commissioner Kurani stated that the school districts have shown their disagreement with some recent projects due to the potential impacts. The projects have continued on as a matter of right, however, how are the school districts keeping up and stepping up to the plate. His concern is that the lower level education, starting at the elementary level, where kids may not have good institutions to attend because so many people are coming in and impacting them.

Ms. Stetson stated that in terms of implementation that is out of the scope of the General Plan, only because the City does not have the ability to tell them how, where and why. The City does take a strong stand in the General Plan about cooperating, pacing and recognizing the needs of the schools.

Commissioner Leonard noted that the plan has a series of trails leading to the Santa Ana River but nothing along the river. He asked if there was an implied trail system that these would all link to or are there restrictions that were encountered in trying to capture the trail system and complete the park concept outlined by Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Morrison replied that there was a trail along the Santa Ana River. There is a separate trail map which is not available at this time.

Ms. Stetson added that it was not included this evening because it is part of the Circulation Element.

Commissioner Leonard asked if the Commission will be seeing examples of how the various corridors could be implemented along the streets.

Mr. Morrison explained that they will not be developing detailed concepts of the different corridors at the General Plan level. One way the City can ensure this is included is to incorporate a strategic measure to develop a parkways plan as soon as possible to implement this as development occurs. This would involve creative discussions with regard to setbacks, trails, etc that go with parks and circulation systems.

Commissioner Leonard stated that the Commission struggles to incorporate this issue into the current processes. So far, they have only required additional right-of-way where properties are vacant or undeveloped. His concern is that the Commission reviews projects which continue to reduce the amount of available land along these corridors. His concern that they are a long way out from adoption and continue to lose property or opportunities weekly.

Mr. Morrison agreed and stated that the Commission can begin to implement this on a case by case basis. To responsibly make this work, however, parkways plan should be created which can accomplish this sooner rather than later. The City will be able to capture these parkway potentials before they go away piece by piece.

Commissioner Kurani recalled that at one of the Magnolia corridor workshops the committee discussed parkways. At that time, he also brought up the fact that Arlington Avenue had been left out, forgotten for some reason. He personally saw that Arlington, from La Sierra to Central, could also be a parkway. He referred to exhibit LU-2 which indicates the various corridors. He stated that his point was that it didn't matter where someone lived as long as transportation was available. If the system is being developed so that people can move around, these things should be considered in developing the concept of parkways.

Mr. Morrison said that the graphic showing the corridors could be improved to indicate what Commissioner Kurani was saying. He thought this was a good point and suggested that Commissioner Kurani recommend this be considered.

He continued with an overview of the Arts and Culture Element. He stated that the committee did a fantastic job and he urged the Commission to read this section.

Commissioner Leonard noted that a couple of sites outside the City were identified. He asked if it would be reasonable to include the Jensen Alvarado Ranch on the north side and perhaps the Trujillo Adobe as well.

Mr. Morrison said that since this had already ventured outside the boundary, adding these would be reasonable.

Commissioner Densmore asked for clarification regarding the cultural village definition and whether this would have a tendency to isolate people or pull them together within a city context as opposed to a neighborhood context.

Mr. Morrison replied that it would depend on how this was implemented and how the process worked. He felt that it was the arts and culture committee's view that it would be a new way for different groups in the community to express their community pride by celebrating aspects of their heritage and integrating it in an innovative contemporary way. Continuing community dialogue is the last principle of the Visioning process which will ensure Riverside will continue to be sensitive and respectful of everyone and enhance the identity of the City rather than divide it.

Commissioner Densmore commented that as a commissioner, he would be sensitive to ensuring the neighborhoods do not see themselves either as being isolated from other neighborhoods or to a certain extent excluded from other neighborhoods.

Commissioner Kurani asked of encouraging compatible architecture within a cultural village.

Mr. Morrison explained that the Arts Element does not address architectural guidelines. These would be covered in the Design Guidelines.

Ms. Stetson emphasized that the Arts and Culture Element could also be an economic driver. Arts and culture activities can attract people which is something that can help boost the economy as well.

She presented an overview of Air Quality Element. She stated this was not a State requirement but that the city has expressed an intense focus on air quality and how important it is to the health of the community and the region as a whole. She stated that they tailored the air quality element after the Southcoast Air Quality

Management District sample element. It has become the model for the Mayor's Riverside Clean Air City Advisory Committee. She asked if the Commission had any comments or questions. This would be the last Element she had a prepared presentation for and asked whether the Commission would like to proceed with a couple more of the elements.

Commissioner Leonard elaborated on the Air Quality Element from the point of the Citizens Advisory Committee. The committee had a little bit of controversy, as did he, on one aspect of the Air Quality Element which deals with the report's key studies. He wanted to express his concern as it relates to documents prepared by other municipalities being totally irrelevant to the City of Riverside. He felt that the regulatory framework and doing their part to improve air quality gets more to the point of what is relevant to this City.

Chair Agnew felt that the air quality component was extremely important. Creating other implementation ideas such as mixed-use, parkways, etc encourage people to walk and will attract others to come to Riverside. These are components that haven't been done for 50 years and will take the city 20 years to get there. He felt that the proposed plan helped guide the city toward that goal.

Commissioner Kurani commented that air quality directly relates to how the transportation corridor is determined and defined.

Commissioner Densmore said that since they have been presented all of the elements outlined for today that they provide the public with the opportunity to comment. If there is any remaining time, he would like to continue with the other elements.

Chair Agnew asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak. There was no one in the audience wishing to speak and Ms. Stetson was asked to continue with a few more elements.

Ms. Stetson gave an overview of the Education Element.

Commissioner Singletary noted that the safety issue of sidewalks was addressed in the Element but asked if they had looked into the possibility of children being abducted. This is an obstacle parents must also overcome in feeling comfortable letting their kids walk.

Ms. Stetson clarified that it was not addressed in those terms in the Education Element but it is in the Public Safety Element.

Commissioner Norton said that currently she avoids high schools and middle schools at certain times in the day due to massive traffic jams. She asked if there was some way that a land use could be applied to help alleviate this situation. She realized that many schools are already land locked but it is quite an issue for people that get trapped in the drop off and pick up zone.

Ms. Stetson replied that it was difficult in that there wasn't anything in the plan that addressed this specific issue. Many of the schools are in established neighborhoods. The best that could be done is look at areas that will develop and plan schools so that they are located in areas where kids can walk safely.

Commissioner Norton suggested cooperating with the schools.. There has to be a parent or two that could walk neighborhood kids to school.

Ms. Stetson said there was a suggestion which was part of the implementation guide to encourage home based businesses. This would allow parents to stay at home and be there for their kids.



Commissioner Kurani referred to the cybrary policy, ED-5.1. He asked how they were to interpret that statement. He asked if it was a statement or a recommendation that for so much density a library will be required. One of the issues he is grappling with is that everything is available on the internet. Kids are not reading and researching things themselves. He agreed that a cybrary is an integral part of the growth process but reading is equally important and asked if there was a policy for this.

Ms. Stetson said that this raised a good question and that a lot of the objectives and policies in the plan are similar statements. These are statements of good things the City aspires to do. All of the detail is in the implementation guide which takes all of the objectives and policies and gives specific things the City will do to achieve these goals. She understood his concern with regard to cybraries but this was a level of detail that the General Plan usually does not get into. The policy would simply say to provide opportunities for lifelong learning which could mean a number of things, electronic or books.

Chair Agnew asked how willing the school districts were to move these policies forward into implementation.

Ms. Stetson stated that it was a delightful experience to work with the education subcommittee. There are still bureaucratic barriers that must be dealt with but the school district was enthusiastic to work with the city.

Commissioner Densmore observed that the CAC obviously brought together people from various disciplines and persuasions in order to create a cohesive document. The Education Element has fostered a good discussion and he would hope these dialogues continue on a periodic basis so that they can check their improvements. He asked if there was any forum at this particular point where the universities, colleges and school districts met regularly or is it expected to evolve out of the General Plan. He recommended that as part of this implementation a strong encouragement, at all levels, be made to ensure the various disciplines and elements continue to meet to ensure progress is being made.

Ken Gutierrez, Planning Director, stated that RCC has a higher education council which includes business leaders and universities. This committee meets on a semi-annual basis. The Council and city staff also meet with the two school district on an ad hoc basis. He noted that policy E-14, ED-2.1 recommends the collaboration on a strong joint use arrangement, using as a key resource, the Mayor's Joint Use Committee, to create partnerships. He stated that once the plan is adopted, it will not be the end but the beginning. The General Plan Team will remain intact in order to ensure this is a dynamic living document. They will continue to work, monitor and implement the plan. These are the types of suggestions that staff is making note of so that it does become the community's plan.

Ms. Stetson continued with a presentation of the Park and Recreation Element.

Commissioner Densmore asked if there were any recommendations for prioritization.

Ms. Stetson explained that there was no prioritization in the plan. She pointed out that this was a 20 year document and that in that time the priorities may shift. She stated that it would be up to the Council, as part of its budgeting and strategic planning to prioritize how funds should be spent.

Commissioner Norton asked how aggressive the Commission could be in requiring additional setbacks to provide for certain amenities as projects come before them.

Ms. Stetson said that this was addressed in part by the Subdivision Ordinance and the Design Guidelines as well. The Subdivision Ordinance establishes regulations for how land is subdivided and developed. When the Subdivision Ordinance is presented to the Commission, it will include landscaped parkways. The developer



will be required to provide these amenities so that the City does not retroactively spend tax dollars. The Subdivision Ordinance will give the City the authority to ask for those things as part of the development proposal.

Commissioner Leonard noted that every street section had a sidewalk at the curb which completely undermines the concept of creating attractive parkways. He suggested this would be something to consider in reviewing the Circulation Element. He asked staff to elaborate on the differences between what the Riverside Park plan and the Trails Plan advocated in terms of open space and parkways.

Mr. Morrison explained that the trails and parks plan is based heavily on a study that was done in the past. The concept of the Riverside Park does allow for the notion that new linkages can and should be established so that a network enabling one to circulate in the parkways with as many modes as possible creating, at a minimum, trail linkages and, at maximum, actual linear parks.

Commissioner Leonard agreed but felt that they should be established now for cohesion between the two plans.

Ms. Stetson added that the maps must still be reconciled. She agreed that this is a long range plan and the potential linkages should be shown now so that the proper right-of-way may be acquired of developers based on a plan.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that staff has covered about half of the elements tonight. He suggested that the remaining elements be reviewed at future workshops. He stated that Commissioner Densmore raised a very good point with regard to the implementation of the plan. The City has a Capital Improvement Program, this like the General Plan will be the umbrella for broad policies and objectives for the City. The Planning Commission will be required, in the future, based on state law to review capital improvement programs. This takes it down from the General Plan level, gets the planners and planning commissioners involved in the strategic planning and capital improvements. He felt this document would do the very kinds of things the commission has expressed and will be the resource for those issues coming their way.

Commissioner Densmore agreed with Ms. Stetson's comments that over the course of the implementation period there will be changes in policy makers, commissioners and certainly the elected Council. He asked to what extent the General Plan is less a guideline as opposed to a rule in that once adopted it is something that must be adhered to as opposed to should be adhered to.

Mr. Gutierrez said that the General Plan is really a policy level document. The portion of the General Plan the commission works with more is, obviously, the Land Use Element. The General Plan Land Use Element is amended from time to time while other elements are not amended as frequently. The other elements tend to be higher level policy documents that guide development because they do not dictate standards.

Commissioner Densmore said there was a lot of time and resources put into this plan, especially by the planning staff, just so that it could be overturned by four votes. He asked if any other municipality had taken steps to ensure the General Plan became a guideline for a certain period of time requiring a super majority for any changes.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that the current General Plan included a recommendation that General Plan Amendments must be approved by a super majority 5 votes of the City Council. The City Council at that time chose not to implement this recommendation. He also noted that the County's RCIP includes an agreement that the Land Use Element of the General Plan will not be amended for five years. These recommendations can be made through public comment, from the Planning Commission or the Council itself.

Chair Agnew asked if there was anyone in the audience wishing to speak. There was no one in the audience requesting to speak. He announced that the next workshop would be October 14, 2004.

B. **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment to the October 7, 2004 meeting at 9:00 am.